

6/19/2014: PTL Notebook – White, Woodbury now taking charge

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

NORTH LIBERTY, Iowa – Exactly three months have passed since the Iowa Hawkeyes were eliminated from the NCAA Tournament by Tennessee. For a team that danced for the first time in eight years and has most of its nucleus back from a season ago, not much needs to be different.

If anything is different, it's that senior forward Aaron White and junior center Adam Woodbury are even more aware of their roles. In White's case, that reality hit him the moment he sat down with head coach Fran McCaffery following last season's conclusion.

"This is my team," White said. "That's what he told me. He really wants me to lead by example. I've been through the ringer. I've been in almost every situation you could ask for as a college player. He realizes that and he has full trust in me.

"We basically sat down and he told me he wants me to continue working on my body, getting stronger and other than that, it's my team and to conduct myself that way."

Much like Devyn Marble at this time last year, White has NBA ambitions. Instead of going home when the opportunity presented itself, he opted to remain in Iowa City and get in as much time at the team's practice facility as possible. With his senior season approaching, White doesn't anticipate making any drastic changes to his game in terms of elevating it to

another level.

White also recently got invited to the Kevin Durant Skills Academy, which takes place next week in Washington, D.C. According to the camp's web site, the "top 15 college wing players" receive invites. Oddly enough, White said he learned the news of his invite while getting his phone fixed.

"My phone was broken and I was actually at the AT&T store," White said. "Coach Sherm[an Dillard] was calling me and he was like, 'Where have you been? I've called you six times.' I was pumped."

As for Woodbury, a lot was made about his NCAA Tournament showing against the Volunteers and for good reason. That evening, he dropped 16 points and eight rebounds and looked every bit the part of the player McCaffery has always envisioned him becoming.

Woodbury said he has only seen "bits and pieces" of that game and hasn't gone back to re-watch it start to finish. But that didn't leave him without observations.

"In the grand scheme of things, it was only one game, but it gave me some confidence going into this spring and this offseason," Woodbury said. "I know what I'm capable of. I mean, that's something I could have done just about every night. It just didn't happen to work out that way."

Last offseason, one of Woodbury's biggest priorities was building up strength. With that bulk well-established now, one of his biggest goals now is continuing to show the consistency he believes he provided as a sophomore.

"They knew what I was bringing every night," Woodbury said. "I wasn't scoring a lot. That wasn't asked of me. But hopefully maybe this year, I'll be able to score a little bit more."

Culver's/McCurry's (white) 95, Westport Touchless

Autowash/IAHomesForSale (purple) 89

Fittingly, White and Woodbury went head-to-head Thursday in the first night of Prime Time League games this summer at the North Liberty Community Center. This time around, White got the best of Woodbury as his Culver's/McCurry's squad defeated Autowash/Homes 95-89 in a game that wasn't really as close as the final score indicated.

Culver's/McCurry's was in control from the start and had built a lead that was 56-37 at halftime and was as many as 20 points (81-61) before Autowash/Homes managed to rally back and get within one point at 88-87 inside the last two minutes.

White finished the contest with a double-double of 25 points and 10 rebounds, shooting 6-of-19 from the floor and 13-of-19 from the free-throw line. Culver's/McCurry's was without the services of incoming sophomore guard Trey Dickerson, who is expected to make his PTL debut next month when games are being played in Waterloo.

Autowash/Homes received a 27-point, 9-rebound showing from Woodbury, who shot 12-of-24 from the floor in defeat. Like Culver's/McCurry's, Autowash/Homes was also without a Hawkeye guard. Junior Anthony Clemmons is currently in his home state of Michigan and is expected back at the end of the month when the UI's next summer school period commences.

Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty (gray) 83, L.L. Pelling/Comfort Care Medicare (light blue) 69

In a game that featured a much quicker pace, junior forward Jarrod Uthoff and his Armstrong squad built a 13-point halftime lead and didn't look back as it defeated Pelling/Comfort Care, 83-69.

Uthoff had a performance that has been typical of him in PTL play, as he finished with 22 points, eight rebounds and five

assists. But the interesting aspect of his stat line was all 18 of his shot attempts came inside the arc. Uthoff said he was merely taking advantage of mismatch situations that presented themselves Thursday.

One of his biggest priorities at the moment is adding weight, saying he wants to be 5-10 pounds bigger before November when the 2014-15 season begins. Uthoff is currently listed at 208 pounds.

"It's an uphill battle for me," Uthoff said. "I eat as much as I can and just burn a lot of calories."

Meanwhile, Pelling/Comfort Care received a pair of 15-point efforts from its senior duo of Gabe Olaseni and Josh Oglesby. Olaseni – who was the league's top draft pick this summer – also hauled in 17 boards, but was less than enthused about shooting 5-of-19 from the floor because he wasn't able to showcase the post moves he said he has worked on this offseason.

"That was the first time I was double and triple-teamed in my life," Olaseni said following Thursday's contest. "I didn't handle it well."

Armstrong was minus the services of incoming freshman guard Brady Ellingson, who isn't expected to play in the PTL until next month.

Vinton Merchants/Marion Iron Company (light orange) 102, BlendCard (burnt orange) 95

The best PTL game of the evening was the nightcap as Merchants/Iron held on to defeat BlendCard, 102-95.

From Iowa's perspective, the story for Merchants/Iron on Thursday was the performance of incoming freshman Dominique Uhl. The 6-8 forward shot 7-of-11 from the floor to finish with 18 points, along with five assists and four rebounds. Uhl

just arrived on the UI campus last weekend and Thursday marked his first basketball activity of any kind with any Iowa teammates.

“This was the first time I had seen him play and he played very well,” said junior guard Mike Gesell, who is playing alongside Uhl this summer on Merchants/Iron. “He was a little tentative at first, but that’s how it goes when you’re playing against older guys. Once he got going, he played very well. He showed his athleticism, he showed that he could shoot the ball. He’s going to be a very good offensive player.”

Throughout the evening, Uhl showcased a plethora of skills when he had the ball in his hands. Whether it was knowing when to go for a lay-up, finding an open teammate or throwing down a dunk over two defenders, Uhl showed off traits that could prove beneficial come winter.

As he gets acclimated to being in Iowa, Uhl believes there are a variety of areas in his game that need work between now and November.

“I’m just trying to get stronger all the time,” Uhl said. “I got to work on my body, work on my shot and always try to work on my ball-handling and just get used to college life.”

In addition to Uhl’s performance, Merchants/Iron also received a 15-point, 6-assist outing from Gesell and an 8-point game from incoming freshman walk-on Nicholas Baer. Northern Iowa’s Nate Buss finished with a game-high 40 points on 17-of-27 shooting.

As for BlendCard, Northern Iowa’s Seth Tuttle finished with 27 points on 10-of-14 shooting. It also received a 15-point outing from sophomore guard Peter Jok, who shot 6-of-10 from the floor. Junior walk-on Okey Ukah had six points and two rebounds.

**PTL play resumes June 26 at the North Liberty Community*

Center, starting with two games at 6 p.m. Central – Culver's/McCurry's vs. Vinton Merchants/Marion Iron Company and Westport Touchless Autowash/IAHomesForSale vs. L.L. Pelling/Comfort Care Medicare – followed by a 7:30 p.m. Central contest between Jill Armstrong of Skogman Realty and BlendCard. Be sure to visit HawkeyeDrive.com for ongoing coverage of the PTL this summer.

PLAYER INTERVIEWS:

Aaron White:

Dominique Uhl: